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Modern Industrialism and the Negroes of the United States

BY ARCHIBALD H. GRIMKE.

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MODERN INDUSTRIALISM AND THE NEGROES OF THE UNITED STATES.

What is that tremendous system of production, organization and struggle known as modern industrialism going to do with the Negroes of the United States? Passing into its huge hopper and between its upper and nether millstones, are they to come out grist for the nation, or mere chaff, doomed like the Indian to ultimate extinction in the raging fires of racial and industrial rivalry and progress? Sphinx's riddle, say you, which yet awaits its Oedipus? Perhaps, though an examination of the past may show us that the riddle is not awaiting its Oedipus so much as his answer, which he has been writing slowly, word by word, and inexorably, in the social evolution of the republic for a century, and is writing still. If we succeed in reading aright what has already been inscribed by that iron pen, may we not guess the remainder, and so catch from afar the fateful answer? Possibly. Then let us try.

With unequaled sagacity the founders of the American Republic reared, without prototype or precedent, its solid walls and stately columns on the broad basis of human equality, and of certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, to which they declared all men entitled. Deep they sunk their foundation piles on the consent of the governed, and committed fearlessly, sublimely, the new state to the people. But there was an exception, and on this exception hangs our tale, and turns the dark drama of our national history.

Those founders had to deal with many novel and perplexing problems of construction, but none seemed so difficult to handle as were those which grew out of the presence of African slavery, as an industrial system, in several of the States. At the threshold of national existence these men were constrained by circumstances to make an exception to the primary principles which they had placed at the bottom of their untried and bold experiment in popular government. This sacrifice of fundamental truth carried along with it one of the sternest retributions of history. For it involved the admission on equal footing into the Union of a fundamental error in ethics and economics, with which our new industrial democracy was forced presently to engage in deadly strife for existence and survivorship.

The American fathers were, undoubtedly, aware of the misfortune of admitting under one general government, and on terms of equality, two mutually invasive and destructive social ideas and their corresponding systems of labor. But they were baffled at the time by what appeared to be a political necessity, and so met the grand emergency of the age by concession and a spirit of conciliation. Many of them, indeed, desired on economic as well as on moral

grounds the abolition of slavery, and probably felt the more disposed to compromise with the evil in the general confidence with which they regarded its early and ultimate extinction.

This humane expectation of the young republic failed of realization, owing primarily and chiefly, I think, to the potent influence upon the institution of slavery of certain labor-saving inventions and their industrial application in England and America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. These epoch-making inventions were the spinning jenny of Hargreaves, the spinning machine of Arkwright and the mule of Crompton, in combination with the steam engine, which turned, says John Richard Green, "Lancastershire into a hive of industry." And last, though not least in its direct and indirect effects on slavery, was the cotton gin of Eli Whitney, which formed the other half—the other hand, so to speak—of the spinning frame. The new power loom in England created a growing demand for raw cotton, which the American contrivance enabled the Southern planter to meet with an increased supply of the same. Together these inventions operated naturally to enhance the value of slave labor and slave land, and therein conduced powerfully to the slave revival in the United States, which followed their introduction into the economic world. The slave industrial system, no longer then a declining factor in the life of the young nation, assumed, instead, unexpected importance in it, and started promptly upon a course of extraordinary expansion and prosperity.

Two other circumstances combined with the one just mentioned to produce this unexpected and deplorable result. They were the slave compromises of the Constitution and the early territorial expansion of the republic southward. These compromises gathered the reviving slave system, as it were, under the wings of the general government, and so tempered the adverse forces with which it had to struggle for existence within the Union to its tender condition. They embraced the right to import Negroes into the United States, as slaves, until the year 1808, which operated to satisfy, in part, the rising demand of the South for slave labor; also the right to recover fugitive slaves in any part of the country, which added immensely to the security of this species of property, and the right of the slaveholding States, under the three-fifths rule of representation in the lower house of Congress, to count five slaves as three freemen, which rule, taken in conjunction with the equality of State representation in the upper branch of that body, gave to that section an immediate and controlling influence upon federal policy and legislation.

The territorial expansion of the republic southward coincided curiously in point of time with the territorial needs of the slave system incident to its industrial revival. Increased demand for the products of slave labor in the market of the world had, by the action of natural causes, raised the demand for that labor in the South. This increased demand was satisfied, to a limited extent, by the Constitutional provision relative to the importation of that labor into the United States prior to the year 1808, and to an unlimited extent by the peculiar Southern industry of slave breeding, and the domestic slave trade, which, owing to favorable economic conditions, became

presently great and thriving enterprises for the production of wealth. The crop of slaves grew in time to be as valuable as the crop of cotton, and the slave section waxed, in consequence, rich and prosperous apace. But as our expanding slave system was essentially agricultural, it required large and expanding areas within which to operate efficiently. Wherefore there arose early in the slave-holding section an industrial demand for more slave soil. There was a political reason, also, which intensified this demand for more slave soil, but as it was merely incidental to the economic cause, I will leave it undiscussed for the present. This economic demand of the expanding slave system for more land was met by the opportune cession to the United States by Georgia and North Carolina of the southwest region, out of which the States of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee were subsequently carved, and by the acquisition of the Louisiana and the Florida territories. So much for the causes, conditions and circumstances in the early history of the republic, which combined to revive slavery, and to make it an immensely important factor in American industrial life, and consequently an immensely important factor in American political life as well.

Just a word in passing regarding the character of Southern labor. It was, as you all know, mainly agricultural. Its enforced ignorance, and its legally and morally degraded condition, incapacitated the slave-holding States from diversifying their single industry and limited them to the tillage of the earth. This feature was economically the fatal defect of the slave industrial system in its rivalry with the free industrial system of the North. There were, of course, other forms of labor employed in the South, such as the house-servant class, while many of the Negroes on plantations and in Southern cities worked as carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, harness-makers, millwrights, wheelwrights, barbers, tailors, stevedores, etc., etc.; but, as labor classes, they were relatively of slight importance in point of numbers, and as wealth producers, in comparison to the field hand.

Unlike the Indian under similar circumstances, the Negro did not succumb to the terrible toil and inhumanity of his environment. He did not decline numerically, nor show any tendency to do so, but exhibited instead extraordinary vitality and reproductive vigor. In physical quality and equipment he was, as a laborer, ideally adapted to the South, and accordingly augmented enormously in social and commercial value to that section, and in numbers, at the same time. He possessed, besides, certain other traits which fitted him peculiarly to his hard lot and task. He was of laborers the most patient, the most submissive, the most faithful, the most cheerful. He was capable of the strongest affection and of making the greatest sacrifices for those to whom he belonged. In his simple and untutored heart there was no desire for vengeance, and in his brave black hands he bore nothing but gifts to the South—gifts of golden leisure, untold wealth, baronial pleasure and splendor, infinite service, and, withal, a phenomenal effacement of himself. Economically weak, yet singularly favored by a fortuitous combination of circumstances, slave labor flourished and expanded until at length it came into rough contact and rivalry with modern industrialism as it leaped into life

under the magical influence of free institutions in the non slave-holding half of the Union.

It might be said that modern industrialism in America had its rise in certain causes and circumstances which existed at the beginning of the present century. It is well known how at that time almost the entire commerce of the civilized world outside of Great Britain and her colonial possessions was carried on under the American flag, in American bottoms, and also how among British orders in council, Napoleon's Berlin and Milan decrees and our own embargo and non-intercourse acts, retaliatory measures adopted by our government, this splendid commerce was speedily and effectually destroyed, and how finally this catastrophe produced in turn our first industrial crisis under the Constitution. New England found herself, in consequence, in great and widespread public distress, and her large capital, erstwhile engaged in commercial ventures at vast profit, became suddenly idle and non-productive. But it is an ill wind which blows no good. So it was in the case of New England at this peirod. For the ill wind which carried ruin to her commerce and want to hundreds of thousands of people, carried also the seeds and small beginnings of all her subsequent manufacturing greatness and prosperity. With the development of manufactures, which now followed, and the diversifying of American industries in the northern section of the Union, modern industrialism as a tremendously aggressive social factor and system of free labor was thereupon launched upon its long and stormy rivalry and struggle with slave institutions and slave labor for the possession of the republic, and, as a resultant of this conflict, it began to affect also the history and destiny of the Negroes of the United States.

New England, naturally enough, was not at all well disposed toward a government whose acts had inflicted upon her such bitter distress, such ruinous dislocations of her capital and labor. This angry discontent was much aggravated later by the War of 1812, into which, in the opinion of that section, the country was precipitated by reason of Southern domination in national affairs. And thus was, perhaps, awakened in the North for the first time a distinct consciousness of the existence in the peculiar labor and institutions of the South, of interests and forces actively opposed to those of free labor and free institutions.

With the close of this war and the conclusion of peace, the non-slaveholding section took on fresh industrial life and embarked then upon that career of material exploitation and development which has placed it and the wonderful achievements of its diversified industries in the front rank of rivals in the markets of the world. From this period dates the beginning of our national policy of protection of domestic industries, and the rise of a powerful monied class in politics which bore to the new industrial interests similar relations to those sustained by the slave power to Southern labor and institutions. The early policy of a tariff for revenue with incidental encouragement inaugurated by Hamilton, was now readapted to the growing needs of the new industrialism, and the growing demands of its champions.

The principle of protection was made as elastic in its practical application to tariff legislation as Northern industrial interests would, from time to time, and in their stages of rapid progress, seem to require.

The labor employed by the new industrialism was free white labor, each unit of which as wage earner and citizen was vitally concerned in whatever made for its safety and prosperity. The universal prevalence of the principle of popular education, and the remarkable educational function exercised upon the mental and moral faculties of the people by a right to a voice in the government, gave to this section in due time the most intelligent, energetic and productive labor in the world. Indeed, it is now well understood that modern industrialism attains its highest efficiency as a system of production in that society where popular education is best provided for, and where participation of the masses in the business of government reaches its fullest and freest expression. The freer and the more intelligent a people, all things else being equal, the more productive will be their labor over that of a rival's who may be wanting in these regards. The early and unexpected revival and expansion of slavery in the South was thus followed and met by a rapid counterexpansion of free industrialism at the North on an extraordinary scale.

This conflictive situation evolved presently industrial complications and disturbances of the gravest national importance. Following the treaty of Ghent, the South fell into financial difficulties, and experienced quite generally an increasing pressure of hard times. Although wealthy and prosperous heretofore, it then began to exhibit symptoms of industrial weakness, and to assume more and more a dependent attitude toward the monied classes of the free States. On the other hand, the free industrialism of those States waxed bolder in demands for national protection with the thing it fed on. Its cry was always for more, and so the tariff of 1816 was followed by that of 1824, and it in turn by the one of 1828, during which period industrial depression reached a crisis in the South, producing widespread distress among its slave-planting interests.

Here is Benton's gloomy picture of that section in 1828: "In place of wealth a universal pressure for money was felt; not enough for common expenses; the price of all property down; the country drooping and languishing; towns and cities decaying, and the frugal habits of the people pushed to the verge of universal self-denial for the preservation of their family estates." What was the cause of all this misfortune and misery? Benton found it, and other Southern leaders also, in the unequal action of federal fiscal legislation. "Under this legislation," he shrewdly remarks, "the exports of the South have been made the basis of the federal revenue. The twenty-odd millions annually levied upon imported goods are deducted out of the price of their cotton, rice and tobacco, either in the diminished prices which they receive for these staples in foreign ports, or in the increased price which they pay for the articles they have to consume at home."

The storm centre of this area of industrial depression passed over Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. The very heart of the slave system was thus attacked by the unequal fiscal action of the general government. The South needed for its great staples of cotton, rice and tobacco the freest access to the markets of the world, and unrestricted competition of the world in its own market, and this the principle of protection denied to it. For the grand purpose of the new policy of protection was to occupy and retain as far and as fast as practicable, and in some cases a little farther and faster, a monopoly of the home market for the products of the new industrialism, and therefore to exclude foreign buyers and sellers therefrom on equal terms with their domestic rivals. Owing to the limitations of its peculiar labor the South was disabled from adapting itself, as the North had just done, to changing circumstances and new economic conditions, and so was deprived of participation in the benefits of a high tariff. Its slave system and industrial prosperity were accordingly caught by the free industrialism of the North at a fatal disadvantage and pressed mercilessly to the wall.

And so it happened that the protective tariff which was welcomed as a boon by one set of industrial interests in the Union was by another set at the same time denounced as an abomination. But when the struggle between them grew fierce and threatened to disrupt the sections a compromise was hit upon and a sort of growling truce established for a season whereby the industrial rivals were persuaded that, in spite of the existence of bitter differences and memories, they could nevertheless live in peace and prosperity under the same general government. The soul of the compromise measures of 1833, which provided for the gradual abolishment, during nine years, of the specific features of the high tariff objectionable to the South, failed, however, to reach the real seat of the trouble, namely, the counter-expanding movements of the two systems, with their mutual inclinations during the operation, to encroach the one upon the other, and a natural tendency on the part of the stronger to destroy the weaker in an incessant conflict for survivorship, which would persist with the certainty and constancy of a law of nature, compromise acts by Congress to the contrary notwithstanding. And so the struggle for existence between the two industrial forces went on beneath the surface of things. Meanwhile modern industrialism was gaining steadily over its slave competitor in social strength and political importance and power.

This conflict for industrial domination developed logically in an industrial republic into one for political domination. It was unavoidable, under the circumstances, that the strife between our two opposing systems of labor should gather about the federal government and rage fiercest for its possession as a supreme coign of vantage. The power which was devoted to the protection of slavery and the power which was devoted to the protection of the new industrialism here locked horns in a succession of engagements for position and final mastery. It seems to have been early understood by a sort of national instinct, popular intuition, that as this issue between the contesting systems happened to be decided the Union would

thereupon be put in the way of becoming eventually either wholly free or wholly slave, as the case might be. Wherefore the two sections massed in time their opposing forces for the long struggle at this quarter of the field of action.

It has already been noted that certain advantages had accrued to the South from the original distribution of political power under the national Constitution, and from sundry cessions of territory to the general government after the adoption of that instrument. But while the South secured indeed the lion's share of those early advantages, the North got at least two of considerable moment, viz., the Constitutional provision for the abolition of the African slave trade, in 1808, which imposed, after that year and from that source, a check upon the numerical increase of slaves within the Union, and, secondly, the Ordinance of 1787, which excluded forever the peculiar labor of the South from spreading into or taking root in the Northwest territory, and, therefore, in that direction placed a limit to its territorial expansion. Together they proved eventually of immense utility to free industrialism in its strife with the slave industrial system, the first operating in its favor negatively, and the second positively in the five populous and prosperous commonwealths which were subsequently organized out of this domain, and in which free labor grew and multiplied apace.

The struggle over the admission of Missouri into the Union terminated in a drawn battle, in which both sides gained and lost. The slave system obtained *in esse* an additional slave State and two others *in posse,* out of the Louisiana territory, while free industrialism secured the erection of an imaginary fence through this land, to the north of which its slave rival was never to settle. Maine was also admitted to preserve the *status quo* and balance of political forces between the sections. Alas! however, for the foresight of statesmen who build for the present only, and are too much engrossed by the cares and fears of a day to see far into national realities, or to follow beneath the surface of things the action of moral and economic laws and to deduce therefrom the trend of national life. The slave wall of 1820, confidently counted upon by its famous builders to constitute thenceforth a permanent guarantee of peace between the rivals, disappointed these calculations, for it developed ultimately into a fresh source of discord and strife. And in view of the unavoidable conflict of our counterexpanding systems of labor, their constant tendency to encroach the one upon the other in the operation, and the bitter and ever-enduring dread and increasing demands of the weaker, it was impossible for the compromise of 1820 to prove otherwise.

The South, under the leadership of Calhoun, came presently to regard the Missouri arrangement as a capital blunder on its part, and from the standpoint of that section this conclusion seems strictly logical. For the location of a slave line upon the Louisiana territory operated in fact as a decided check to the expansion of slavery as a social rival and a political power at one and the same time, while it added immensely to the potential strength of the rapidly expanding

forces of modern industrialism in its contest for social and political supremacy in the Union.

In the growing exigency of the slave industrial system, under these circumstances, the reparation of this blunder was deemed urgent, and so, in casting about to find some solution of its problem, the attempted abrogation of the compromise law itself not being considered wise by Calhoun, the slave power fell upon Texas, struggling for independence. An agitation was consequently started to correct the error of the Missouri compromise by the annexation of a region of country described in the graphic language of Webster to be so vast that "a bird could not fly over it in a week." What the South had lost by the blunder of the slave wall of 36° 30′ was then expected, barring accidents of course, to be restored to it in the new slave States, and in the large augmentation of slave representation in the general government, which would eventually ensue from the act of annexation. But the accident of the Mexican war wrecked completely the deep scheme of the Texan plotters, and neutralized the political advantage which had accrued to the slave power in the admission of Texas into the Union by the acquisition of California and New Mexico at the close of that war. It was a checkmate by destiny. Chance had at a critical moment aligned itself definitely on the side of modern industrialism in the American republic and given a decisive turn to the long contest with its slave rival.

With the admission of California as a free State the political balance between our two opposing systems of labor was irreparably destroyed. For, while the South possessed Texas, and an expectation of acquiring new slave States therefrom, this expectation amounted practically to a bare possibility. For it was found, owing to the inferior colonizing resources of the slave system, far easier to annex this immense domain than to people it, or to organize out of it States for emergent needs. On the other hand, the superior colonizing ability of free labor, taken in conjunction with all that vast, unoccupied territory belonging to it and inviting settlement, promised, in the ordinary course of events, to increase and confirm this preponderance of political power, and so to seal the fate of slavery. Nor do I forget in this connection that the bill, which organized into territories Utah and New Mexico, was, in deference to Southern demand, purged of the Wilmot *proviso*. But this concession on the part of Northern politicians had no real value to the South, for, as Webster pointed out at the time, slave labor was effectually interdicted from competing with free labor for the possession of this land by a power higher than the Wilmot *proviso,* viz., by a law of nature. The failure, however, to re-enact this decree of nature in 1850 prepared the way for the demolition of the slave wall four years later, and thus operated to hasten the grand catastrophe.

The repeal of the Missouri compromise did for the more or less fluid state of anti-slavery sentiment at the North what Goethe says a blow will do for a vessel of water on the verge of freezing—the water is thereby converted instantly into solid ice. So did the agitation produced by the abrogation of that act convert the gradually

congealing sentiment of the free States on the subject of slavery into settled opposition to its farther extension to the national territories and into a fixed purpose to confine it within its then existing limits. But to put immovable bounds to the territorial expansion of the slave industrial system was virtually, under the circumstance, to provide for its decline and ultimate extinction, for the beginning of a period of actual and inhibited non-extension of slavery as a rival system of labor in the Union would mark the termination of its period of growth and the commencement of its industrial decay. The peril of the slave system was certainly extreme, and the dread of the slave power was not less so.

The national situation was full of gloom and menace to the industrial rivals. For the passions of the slave power were taking on an ominously violent and reckless energy of expression, which, unless all signs fail, would take on presently a no less violent and reckless energy of action. The crisis was intensified, first, by the repeal on the part of certain free States of their slave-sojournment laws; second, by the extraordinary activity of the underground railroad; third, by increasing opposition in the North to the execution of the Fugitive Slave law, all of which, acting together, seriously impaired the value and security of slave property in the Union; fourth, by that fierce, obstinate, but futile, struggle of the South to obtain possession of Kansas, and the exposure thereby of its marked inferiority as a colonizer in competition with modern industrialism; fifth, by the growing influence of the abolition movement, and, sixth, by those nameless terrors of slave insurrections, which were evoked by the apparition of John Brown at Harper's Ferry. This acute situation was finally rendered intolerable to the slave power upon the election of Abraham Lincoln on a sectional platform, pledged to a policy of uncompromising resistance to the farther extension of slavery to the territories. Worsted within the Union, it was natural that the South should refuse to yield at this point of the conflict, and that it should make an attempt, as a dernier resort, to secede from it with its peculiar institution for the purpose of continuing the battle for its existence outside of a political system in which it had been overborne and hemmed in upon itself by modern industrialism and so doomed by that inexorable force to slow but absolutely certain extinction.

But the Union, which had developed such deadly industrial peril to the South, had created for the North its immense industrial prosperity, was, in sooth, the origin and mainspring of its powerful and progressive civilization. And so, while the preservation of the peculiar institution and civilization of the former necessitated a rupture of the old Union and the formation of a new one, founded on Negro slavery, every interest and attachment of the latter cried out for the maintenance of the old and the destruction of the new government. The long conflict of the two rival systems of labor culminated in the war to save the old Union on the part of the North and to establish a new one on the part of the South, whose Constitution rested directly upon the doctrine of social unity. Social duality was the great fact in the Constitution of the old Union; social uni-

formity was to be the great fact in the new. A State divided socially against itself cannot stand. The South learned this supreme lesson in political philosophy well, much more quickly and thoroughly than had the North, whose comprehension of it was painfully slow. And even that part of the grand truth which it did come to apprehend after prolonged wrestlings with bitter experience it reduced to practice in every emergency with moral fears and tremblings.

In the tremendous trial of strength between the sections which followed the rebel shot on Sumter the South was at the end of four years completely overmatched by the North, and by sheer weight of numbers and material resources was borne down at all points and forced back into the old Union, less its system of slave labor. For the destruction of the Southern Confederacy had involved, as a military necessity, the destruction of Negro slavery, which was its chief cornerstone. With the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution the ancient cause of sectional difference and strife, viz., duality of labor systems, was supposed, quite generally at the North, to have been removed, and that a new era of unity in this respect had thereupon straightway begun. It seems to have been little understood by the North at the time, and since, for that matter, that Negro slavery in the South would die hard, and that it has a fatal gift of metamorphosis (ability to change its form without changing its nature), and that while it had under the well-directed stroke of the national arm disappeared as chattel slavery, it would reappear, unless hindered, as African serfdom throughout the Southern States, and that they would return to the Union much stronger politically than when they seceded, and much better equipped for a renewal of the unquenched strife for industrial existence in 1865 than they were in 1860.

The immediate work of reconstructing civil society in the old slave States to meet the new condition of freedom was now by an egregious executive blunder left wholly to the master class, with the startling result at its close that, whereas Negro slavery had been abolished, Negro serfdom reappeared in every instance as the industrial basis of the reconstructed States, and that a serf power was about to take the place of the slave power in the newly restored Union more dangerous than the old slave power to free industrialism than five is greater than three in federal numbers. For, while according to the old rule of slave representation in the lower house of Congress it took five slaves to nullify the votes of three freemen, under a new rule of apportionment which would probably obtain five serfs would be equivalent politically to five freemen. At this all the ancient hatred and dread of its Protean rival blazed hotly in the heart of the North, and with its passionate fear emerged a no less passionate desire to secure forever the domination of its industrial democracy over the newborn nation.

Actuated by this motive to dominate the republic, the freedmen whom the old master class had by prompt legislation reduced to a condition of serfdom were thereupon raised by the North through Constitutional amendment to the plane of citizenship. And when

this act proved inadequate to arrest the threatened Southern revival in the national government, the ballot was next placed in their hands to avert the impending danger. It was under such circumstances that the work of Southern reconstruction was entered upon by Congress, i. e., in reality by the North, the South having had its chance and failed to reconstruct itself upon a basis satisfactory to its victorious rival, and in consonance with its sense of industrial and political security and progress.

I know that it is now the universal vogue to criticize and condemn this stupendous work of Congress as wholly wanting in knowledge of human nature and as woefully deficient in wise statesmanship. I know also that hindsight is at all times attended with less embarrassment to him who uses it than is foresight; and I know, besides, that those historic actors who had not attained unto a position of futurity in respect to their task, but whose task sustained to them that relative place instead, were obliged to do the best they could with whatever quantum of the latter faculty they might have possessed and toward the manful achievement of their duty. And this is what Congress did at this juncture. In view of the long, bitter and disastrous strife between the two sets of industrial ideas and interests in the republic, of the complex and earthquake circumstances and conditions in which they were thrown in relation to each other at the close of the rebellion, together with the imperious urgency for immediate and decisive action on the part of the North, I confess that it is extremely difficult to see even with the aid of hindsight what other practicable course was then open to that section to pursue than the one selected by Congress in the emergency as the best and wisest. And all things considered, it was the best and wisest, which, when the present generation of criticism and reaction has passed, will, I think, be so adjudged by impartial truth.

Congress might at this juncture have led the country by another way out of the perils which threatened afresh its peace and security, by a way dreadful and inhuman, it is true, but which offered nevertheless a radical and permanent cure for the evils which flow naturally from the union under one general government of two mutually invasive and destructive industrial systems, viz., by the forcible deportation of the entire black population of the South, and the introduction into their stead of an equal number of white immigrants. Such a course would have certainly achieved the unification of the sections by the extinguishment and elimination of the weaker of our two rival systems of labor. It was, however, a solution of its Southern problem, which the nation was in morals, economics and humanity precluded absolutely from adopting, for three simple and sufficient reasons: First, for the sake of the South, which, wasted and bewildered, lay sullen and prostrate amidst the wreck and chaos of civil strife and at its lowest ebb of productive energy and wealth, its sole recuperative chance depending on the labor of its former slaves. To deport this labor, under the circumstances, would have been cruelly to deprive that section of its last vital resource, and to sink it to a state of industrial collapse and misery, by the side of which its

condition at the close of the war might have seemed prosperity and paradise. Second, the nation itself could ill sustain the shock incident to such a huge amputation from the body of its productive labor, and which must have, for long and bitter years, affected disastrously its solvency, greatness and progress. Besides, the presence in the lately rebellious States of a mass of loyal people, like the blacks, constituted an immensely important element of strength and security to the newly restored Union. And, third, the blacks themselves had by two centuries of unpaid toil bought the right to remain in a country which had enslaved them, yet for whose defense and preservation against foreign and domestic foes and through three wars they had bared their brave arms and generous breasts and poured out royally and without measure their devotion, their blood and their life.

The general welfare of the reunited nation demanded not only political unification of the States under one supreme government, but their social unification as well on a common industrial basis of free labor. The coexistence under the old Constitution of two contrary systems of labor had given rise to seventy years of strife and rivalry between the sections, and had plunged them finally into one of the fiercest and most destructive wars of modern times. It was clearly recognized at the close of that war that the foundations of the restored Union should be made to rest directly on the enduring bedrock of a uniform system of free labor for both sections, not as formerly on the shifting sands of two conflicting social orders. For as long as our ancient duality of labor system shall continue to exist there will necessarily continue to exist also duality of ideas, interests and institutions. I do not mean mere variety in these regards which operates beneficiently, but profound and abiding social and political differences, engendering profound and abiding social and political antagonisms, naturally and inevitably affecting sometimes more, sometimes less, national stability and security, and leaving everywhere in the subconscious life of the republic a sense of vague uneasiness, rising periodically to the keenest anxiety, like the ever-present dread felt by a city subject to seismic disturbances. For what has once happened, the cause continuing, may happen again.

The Southern soil was at the moment broken up roughly by the hot ploughshare of civil war. It might have been better prepared for the reception of the good seed by the slower process of social evolution. But the guiding spirits of that era had no choice. The tide of an immense historic opportunity had risen. It was at its flood. Then was the accepted hour—then or never it appeared to them—and so they scattered broadcast seed-ideas of the equality of all men before the law, their inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the derivation of the powers of all just governments from the consent of the governed. These revolutionary ideas fell alongside of the uptorn but living roots of other and hostile political principles, and of the ramified and deep-growing prejudices of an old social order, and had forthwith to engage in a life and death struggle against tremendous odds for existence. Many there are who see in the reconstruction period nothing except

the asserted incapacity of the Negro for self-government—nothing but carpet-bag rule and its attendant corruption. But bad as those governments were, they were, nevertheless, the actual vehicles which conveyed into the South the seeds of our industrial democracy and of a new social and political order. From that period dates the beginning of an absolutely new epoch for that section. The forces set free then in the old slave States have been gradually unfolding themselves amid giant difficulties ever since. They are, I believe, in the South to stay, and are destined ultimately to conquer every square inch of its mind and matter, and so to produce the perfect unification of the republic, by producing the perfect unification of its immense, heterogeneous population, regardless of race, color or previous condition of servitude, on the broad basis of industrial and political equality and fair play.

The contest of the old industrial rivals has, in consequence of this influx of democratic ideas into the South, and the resultant modification of environment there, taken on fresh and deplorable complications. The struggle between the old and the new which is in progress throughout that section is no longer a simple conflict between the two sets of industrial principles of the Union along sectional lines, as formerly, but along race lines now as well. The self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence invading the old slave States have divided that house against itself. Their powerful ally, popular education, is creating everywhere moral unrest and discontent with present injustices and a growing desire on the part of the Negro to have what is denied him, but which others enjoy, viz., free and equal opportunities in the rivalry of life. This battle of ideas in the South is, in reality, a battle for the enduring unification of the sections, the permanent pacification of the republic. The labors of the fathers for a more perfect union will have been in vain unless the Negro wins in this irrepressible conflict between the two industrial systems of the country. It is greatly to be lamented that a question of color and difference of race has so completely disabled the nation and the South from seeing things relating to this momentous subject clear, and seeing them straight. Those who see in this problem only a conflict of races in the South see but a little way into its depths, for underlying this conflict of races is a conflict of opposing ideas and interests which have for a century vexed the peace of the nation. The existence of a system of labor in the South distinct from that of the North separated the two halves of the Union industrially, as far as the East is from the West, made of them in truth two hostile nations, although united under one general government. This difference has been the cause of all the division and strife between the sections, and it will continue to operate as such till completely abolished.

The clinging of the South, under the circumstances, to its old social and political ideas and system, or to such fragments of them as now remain, and its persistent attempts to put these broken parts together, and to preserve thereby what so disastrously distinguishes it from the rest of the country, is an economic error of the first

magnitude—an error which injuriously affects its own industrial prosperity and greatness by retarding its material development and by infecting at the same time with increasing unrest and discontent its faithful and peaceful black labor. The fight which the South is making along this line is a fight not half so much against the Negro as against its own highest good, and that of the country's, for it has in this matter opposed itself ignorantly and madly to the great laws which control the economic world, to the great laws which are the soul of modern industrialism, laws which govern production and exchange, consumption and competition, supply and demand, which determine everywhere, between rival parts of the same country and between rival nations as well, that commercial struggles, industrial rivalries, shall always terminate in the survival of the fittest. If in such a battle the South sow seeds of economic weakness, when it ought to sow seeds of economic strength, it will go down before its rivals, whether those rivals be in this country or in any other country or part of the world. In such a struggle if it would win it will need to avail itself of all the means which God and nature have placed at its disposition.

One of the most important of these means, perhaps the most important single factor in the development and prosperity of the South, is its Negro labor. It is more to it, if viewed aright, than all of its gold, iron and coal mines put together. If properly treated and trained it will mean fabulous wealth and greatness to that section. Lest you say that I exaggerate, I will quote the estimate put upon this labor by the Washington *Post*, which will hardly be accused of enthusiasm touching any matter relating to the Negro, I think. Here it is:

"We hold as between the ignorant of the two races, the Negro is preferable. They are conservative; they are good citizens; they take no stock in social schisms and vagaries; they do not consort with anarchists; they cannot be made the tools and agents of incendiaries; they constitute the solid, worthy, estimable yeomanry of the South. Their influence in government would be infinitely more wholesome than the influence of the white sansculottes, the riff-raff, the idlers, the rowdies and the outlaws. As between the Negro, no matter how illiterate he may be, and the poor white the property owners of the South prefer the former."

The South cannot, economically, eat its cake and have it too. It cannot adopt a policy and a code of laws to degrade its Negro labor, to hedge it about with unequal restrictions and proscriptive legislation, and raise it at the same time to the highest state of productive efficiency. But it must as an economic necessity raise this labor to the highest point of efficiency or suffer inevitable industrial feebleness and inferiority. What are the things which have made free labor at the North the most productive labor in the world and of untold value and wealth to that section? What, but its intelligence, skill, self-reliance and power of initiative? And how have these qualities been put into it? I answer unhesitatingly, by those twin systems of universal education and popular suffrage. One system

trains the children, the other the adult population. The same wide diffusion of knowledge, and large and equal freedom and participation in the affairs of government, which have done so much for Northern labor, cannot possibly do less for Southern labor.

For weal or woe the Negro is in the South to stay. He will never leave it voluntarily, and forcible deportation of him is impracticable. And for economic reasons, vital to that section, as we have seen, he must not be oppressed or repressed. All attempts to push and tie him down to the dead level of an inferior caste, to restrict his activities arbitrarily and permanently to hewing wood and drawing water for the white race, without regard to his possibilities for higher things, is in this age of strenuous industrial competition and struggle an economic blunder, pure and simple, to say nothing of the immorality of such action. Like water, let the Negro find his natural level, if the South would get the best and the most out of him. If nature has designed him to serve the white race forever, never fear. He will not be able to elude nature; he will not escape his destiny. But he must be allowed to act freely; nature does not need our aid here. Depend upon it, she will make no mistake. Her inexorable laws provide for the survival of the fittest only. Let the Negro freely find himself, whether in doing so he falls or rises in the scale of life.

With his labor the Negro is in the market of the world. If, all things considered, he has the best article for the price offered, he will sell; otherwise not. But it is of immense value and moment to the South in both respects. If his labor in all departments of industry in which it may be employed be raised by education of head and hand, by the largest freedom and equality of opportunities, to the highest efficiency of which it is capable, who more than the South will reap its resultant benefits? So will the whole country reap the resultant benefits in the diffused well-being and productivity of its laboring classes, and at the same time in the final removal of the ancient cause of difference and discord between its parts. But if the Negro fail by reason of inherent fitness to survive in such a struggle, his failure will be followed by decline in numbers and ultimate extinction, which will involve no violent dislocation of the labor of the republic, but a displacement so gradual that while one race is vanishing another will be silently crowding into the space thus vacated.

The commercial and industrial rivalry of the nations of the world was never so sharp and intense as at the present time, and all signs point to increased competition among them during this century. In this contest the labor of each country is primarily the grand determining factor. It must from sheer necessity and stress of circumstances be brought in each instance to the highest state of economic efficiency by every resource in the possession of the respective world rivals. And this will be attempted in the future by each of these world rivals on a grandeur of scale and with a scientific thoroughness and energy in the use of educational means not yet realized by the most progressive of them. For those nations who succeed best

in this respect will prevail over those others which fail to raise their labor to an equally high grade of efficiency. Now, if Negro labor is the best for its climate and needs, the South must seek earnestly, constantly, by every means in its power, to raise that labor to the highest state of economic efficiency of which it is capable. That section must do so in spite of its chimerical fears of Negro domination, in spite of its rooted race prejudices. It must educate and emancipate this labor, all hostile sentiment of whatever nature to the contrary notwithstanding, if it will hold its own in that great cosmic struggle for existence in which it is now engaged with powerful rivals at home and abroad. Nor can the republic be indifferent on this head. No country in this age of strenuous commercial competition can forget with impunity its duty in this regard. Neglect here brings swift retribution to any nation which carries a vast horde of crude and relatively inefficient labor into an industrial struggle with the rest of the world, for the world's labor will henceforth assume more and more the character of vast standing armies engaged in world-wide industrial warfare. Each unit of these industrial armies will be ultimately trained and disciplined to the highest possible efficiency, and will some time form together perfect machines, which will operate with clock-like precision and purpose at any given quarter of the field of action. In obedience to the first law of nature our country in its battle with industrial rivals to retain present advantages and win new ones in world markets, will have to elevate the whole body of its labor regardless of color or race, to the highest state of economic productivity of which that labor is capable in all of its parts. Colossal forces are behind and under the movement which is making for the final emancipation of the Negro, and for his eventual admission on terms of complete equality of rights and opportunities into the arena of that never-ending rivalry and struggle which is the law of progress.

The Negro has proved himself one of the best soldiers in the world; he will prove himself in this country, provided fair play be accorded him, one of the most productive laborers in the world also. He has the capacity for becoming one of the best all-round laborers and artisans in our industrial army of conquest and one of the best all-round citizens of the republic likewise. Overcome, then, your prejudices, ye white men of the South, and ye white men, too, of the North; trust the Negro in peace as ye have trusted him in war, nor forget that the freest and most intelligent labor is ever the best and most productive labor, and that liberal and equal laws and institutions are the one unerring way yet discovered by human experience and wisdom whereby modern industrialism and democracy may reach their highest development and the highest development of humanity at the same time. This is the age of the people, of consolidation and competition. It is the age of industrialism and democracy, aye, industrialism and democracy are destiny. Try ever so hard, we shall not escape our destiny, neither the Negro, nor the South, nor the nation.

ARCHIBALD H. GRIMKE.

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Organized March 5th, 1897.

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